



# United States Department of the Interior



## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Mother Lode Field Office  
5152 Hillside Circle  
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762-5713  
[www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode](http://www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode)

### Filming within Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek parcels CA-180-07-26 Finding of No Significant Impact July 2014

It is my determination that this decision will not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human environment. Anticipated impacts are within the range of impacts addressed by the Sierra Resource Management Plan (RMP). Thus, the proposed action does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment; therefore, an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not necessary and will not be prepared. This conclusion is based on my consideration of CEQ's following criteria for significance (40 CFR §1508.27), regarding the context and intensity of the impacts described in the EA and based on my understanding of the project:

- 1) *Impacts can be both beneficial and adverse and a significant effect may exist regardless of the perceived balance of effects.* Potential negative impacts include vegetation removal, soil disturbance, and noise and dust. Impacts would be temporary (for the duration of the permit). The severity of the impacts would be reduced by the permit terms, conditions, and stipulations (aka, project design features).
- 2) *The degree of the impact on public health or safety.* No aspects of the proposed action have been identified as having the potential to significantly and adversely impact public health or safety.
- 3) *Unique characteristics of the geographic area.* The geographic area (the Greenwood Creek and Cronan Ranch parcels) include areas of BLM-administered land with special values. Both parcels are located within the South Fork American River Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA), designated by the BLM in 2008. Also, the BLM recommended in 2008 that the South Fork of the American River corridor from Chili Bar to Salmon Falls (including portions of the Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek parcels) be incorporated into the national wild and scenic river system due, in part, to its outstandingly remarkable whitewater recreation and cultural resource values. The segment's classification would be recreational.
- 4) *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial effects.* No anticipated effects have been identified that are scientifically controversial. As a factor for determining within the meaning of 40 C.F.R. § 1508.27(b)(4) whether or not to prepare a detailed environmental impact statement, "controversy" is not equated with "the existence of opposition to a use." *Northwest Environmental Defense Center v. Bonneville Power Administration*, 117 F.3d 1520, 1536 (9th Cir. 1997). "The term 'highly controversial' refers to instances in which 'a substantial dispute exists as to the size, nature, or effect of the major federal action rather than the mere existence of opposition to a use.'" *Hells Canyon Preservation Council v. Jacoby*, 9 F.Supp.2d 1216, 1242 (D. Or. 1998).

5) *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are likely to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.* The analysis does not show that the proposed action would involve any unique or unknown risks.

6) *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.* The proposed action is not precedent setting.

7) *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.* No significant site specific or cumulative impacts have been identified. The proposed action is consistent with the Sierra RMP.

8) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect National Historic Register listed or eligible to be listed sites or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources.* The proposed action would not adversely affect cultural properties listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect ESA listed species or critical habitat.* ESA listed species (or their habitat) would not be affected by the proposed action.

10) *Whether the action threatens a violation of environmental protection law or requirements.* There is no indication that the proposed action will result in actions that will threaten such a violation. The permit holder is required to comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and other requirements.

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William S. Haigh  
Field Manager,  
Mother Lode Field Office

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Date



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**EA Number:** CA-180-07-26

**Proposed Action:** Filming within the Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek parcels

**Location:** MDM, T 11 N, R 9 E, Sections 8, 9,10,11,16, and 17; El Dorado County

### 1.0 Purpose of and Need for Proposed Action

#### 1.1 Purpose and Need

The Bureau of Land Management's Mother Lode Field Office (BLM) manages the Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek parcels, both located along the South Fork of the American River, near the town of Coloma. The Cronan Ranch parcel is 1400 acres. The Greenwood Creek parcel is 732 acres. These parcels have significant environmental and recreational values, and receive considerable public recreational use (i.e., hiking, horseback riding, whitewater rafting, etc.). The parcels are part of the South Fork American River Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA), designated by the BLM in 2008. Also, the South Fork of the American River, from Chile Bar to Salmon Falls Bridge (including portions of the Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek parcels), was recommended eligible and suitable to become part of the national wild and scenic river system, by the BLM in 2008. The recommended outstandingly remarkable values are whitewater recreation and cultural resources. The recommended classification is recreational. Designation requires congressional action.

In February 2007 the BLM approved the Cronan Ranch Management Plan. This plan committed the BLM to preparing a NEPA environmental assessment (EA) for filming at the Cronan Ranch that "identifies appropriate sites, areas where filming is inappropriate, and mitigation measures" (page 5), among other film-related commitments. This EA (which analyzes the potential environmental impacts of permitting filming at the Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek parcels) helps to respond to these commitments. The Greenwood Creek parcel has been included because it adjoins the Cronan Ranch, shares similar significant values, and receives considerable public recreational use. The BLM needs to permit filming in a way that is consistent with the Cronan Ranch Management Plan and would not conflict with these parcels' significant environmental and recreational values, including the recommended wild and scenic river outstandingly remarkable values and classification. This EA establishes Mother Lode Field Office-specific policy in this regard and could serve as programmatic EA in the future to help the BLM process applications for filming within the Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek parcels.

#### 1.2 Decision and Rational

This EA discloses the environmental consequences of implementing the proposed action, which is to permit filming within the Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek parcels. The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) describes the finding of the analysis in this EA. The Mother Lode Field

Office's Field Manager is the BLM's deciding official. The Field Manager's decision and the rationale for that decision will be stated in a separate Decision Record. Based on the information provided in this EA, the Field Manager will decide whether to permit filming within the Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek parcels (with appropriate project design features/stipulations).

## **2.0 Conformance with Applicable Land Use Plans**

The proposed action is consistent with the Sierra Resource Management Plan (RMP), approved in February 2008, which states (page 32) that the goal of the BLM's Land and Realty program is to respond to the demand for land-use authorizations as mandated by FLPMA. The proposed action is also consistent with the 2004 South Fork American River Management Plan (page 14) and the 2007 Cronan Ranch Management Plan. The Cronan Ranch Management Plan (page 5) states:

1. Commercial filming permits may be issued on a case-by-case basis consistent with the overall vision of the property.
2. Monitor all commercial filming activities closely.
3. Pre-prepare a NEPA environmental assessment for commercial filming at the Cronan Ranch that identifies appropriate sites, areas where filming is inappropriate, and mitigation measures.
4. Work with local film commission to help implement a professional film permitting program in conjunction with local government and integrate environmental review into the planning process.
5. The existing structures on the Cronan Ranch from previous films will be removed for public safety reasons.

## **3.0 Proposed Action and Alternatives**

### **3.1 Proposed Action**

Under the proposed action, the BLM would permit filming (both commercial and non-commercial) within the BLM-administered Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek parcels. Filming could involve a number of interrelated activities that vary depending on the nature of the production. In the past these activities have included motorized vehicle use (including the use of multi-axel trucks); building temporary structures such as film sets; and modifying vegetation.

This EA would establish the Mother Lode Field Office's policy regarding filming within the Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek parcels (also referred to herein as "onsite" and the "project area"). In other words this EA would create the process that applicants must go through to obtain a permit from the BLM as well as permit terms and conditions (aka, permit stipulations and project design features) needed to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential negative impacts to the parcels' significant recreational and environmental values, including the recommended wild and scenic river outstandingly remarkable values and recreational classification.

Aside from establishing BLM policy regarding filming within the Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek parcels, this EA could serve in the future as a programmatic EA to help the BLM meet its NEPA requirements in processing an application for a film permit. For each new application, a determination of NEPA adequacy (DNA) analysis would be needed to determine whether this EA is adequate. The DNA worksheet would be assigned a new Mother Lode Field Office NEPA number and would be made available, along with the unsigned FONSI, for public review and comment

(likely through the BLM California NEPA webpage but also possibly through BLM-organized public meetings or other formats). The public review period would be 30 days in cases where the BLM decides the proposed filming activity may exceed the thresholds in 40 CFR 1501.4(e)(2). Under these regulations a 30-day review will be necessary in one or more of the following situations:

- the proposal is a borderline case (such as when there is a reasonable argument for preparation of an EIS);
- it is an unusual case, a new kind of action, or a precedent-setting case, such as a first intrusion of even a minor development into a pristine area;
- there is either scientific or public controversy over the effects of the proposal;
- it involves a proposal that is similar to one that normally requires preparation of an EIS.

Compliance and coordination with other environmental laws, regulations, and policies such as the Endangered Species Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act would occur in concert with the BLM's DNA analysis. After the DNA process is complete (including addressing any public comments) and a FONSI is reached, the BLM would move forward with a Decision Record allowing the BLM to permit the proposed filming activity.

In cases where this EA would clearly be inadequate, the BLM would prepare a new EA to review an application. The EA would be assigned a new Mother Lode Field Office NEPA number and would be made available, along with the unsigned FONSI, for public review and comment (likely through the BLM California NEPA webpage but also possibly through BLM-organized public meetings or other formats). The public review period will be 30 days in cases where the BLM decides the proposal may exceed the thresholds in 40 CFR 1501.4(e)(2) and summarized above. The EA process would help coordinate the BLM's compliance and coordination with other environmental laws, regulations, and policies such as the Endangered Species Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. After the EA process is complete (including addressing any public comments) and a FONSI is reached, the BLM would move forward with a Decision Record allowing the BLM to permit the proposed filming activity.

It is also possible that the BLM would prepare a categorical exclusion (CE) that tiers to this EA. The BLM would use its CE authority only in cases where particular CE(s) would clearly apply and the film proposal would have less than a minimal impact and would not involve areas within the proposed South Fork American Wild and Scenic River corridor (a quarter mile from either side of the river centerline) or affect the recommended wild and scenic river outstandingly remarkable values and classification. The policy established by this EA would apply and the CE document would likely incorporate all of the project design features in this EA. The CE document would be listed for a minimum of seven days on the BLM California NEPA webpage, per BLM California policy. After any public comments are addressed and other environmental review requirements are complete, the BLM would make a decision to permit the proposed filming activity.

Regardless of how the BLM decides to meet its NEPA and other environmental review requirements, the applicant must go through the following process to obtain a permit from the BLM to film within the Greenwood Creek and Cronan Ranch parcels.

#### Application submittal and review process

General information including the application form is available on the Mother Lode Field Office's web site at [www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode](http://www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode). The application review process would vary depending on

the proposed filming location(s), activities, and duration. However, every applicant must provide all of the following items in a single application package to the Mother Lode Field Office:

- Signed application.
- Detailed written description of filming activity.
- Map(s) showing the specific filming location(s) requested within the Cronan Ranch and/or Greenwood Creek parcels. Accurately marked Google Earth images are acceptable.
- Proposed motorized vehicle use plan showing specifically where vehicles would drive, park, stage, etc. within the Cronan Ranch and/or Greenwood Creek parcels. Accurately marked Google Earth images are acceptable. The plan must also address prevention of noxious weed introductions and/or spread.
- Certificate of insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000 naming the United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management Mother Lode Field Office as co-insured. (The amount will be \$10,000,000 if aircraft use is proposed.)

The written description of proposed filming activities must disclose to the BLM the use of animals and exotic plants, ground-disturbing activities, construction of sets and props, the use of explosives/pyrotechnics, the number of crew members, and other pertinent details.

Once a complete and sufficient application is received, the BLM would review it to determine the level of potential environmental impact. Applications proposing use of the Cronan Ranch parcel would be reviewed to determine whether the filming activity is consistent with the vision statement in the Cronan Ranch Management Plan. A proposed filming activity would be considered to have more than a minimal impact if it involves:

- ground-disturbing activities;
- construction of sets and film props;
- explosives/pyrotechnics;
- the use of one or more multi-axel vehicles;
- and/or the use of aircraft.

The BLM would use the information in the application to decide the scope of the NEPA/environmental review including the time it would take to approve an application and permit the proposed filming activity. The BLM would tell the applicant how long it will take to issue the permit. The BLM would reject applications for filming within the Cronan Ranch parcel that are not consistent with the vision statement in the Cronan Ranch Management Plan.

#### General guidelines and considerations

To prevent delays in application processing, the applicant is asked to note the following general guidelines and considerations.

##### *Timing of filming activity*

The applicant should schedule filming activities for weekdays only, particularly during the high-use season (October 31 to May 31) to minimize conflicts with other public land users.

##### *Wildfire prevention*

The following wildfire prevention measures will apply to all BLM-issued film permits regardless of the time of year/threat level for inadvertent wildfire ignition:

- No smoking except in designated areas and in accordance with other BLM requirements.
- No generators or combustion engines in grass or other vegetation.
- Campfires are allowed only after a BLM-issued campfire permit is obtained. Other campfire safety requirements in this permit will apply.
- The use of open flames other than campfires (i.e., pyrotechnics and possibly ammunitions) will be authorized by the BLM on a case-by-case basis and will be specified in the permit.

Fire restrictions on BLM-administered lands vary throughout the year and may affect a BLM-issued film permit. It is the permit holder's responsibility to be aware of all fire restrictions affecting filming location(s) on BLM-administered lands and to ensure that the filming activity is fully compliant with these restrictions. This information is available on the Mother Lode Field Office's official web site at [www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode](http://www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode). Applications may be denied by the BLM if dry warm weather or other wildfire conditions warrant such action. If wildfire ignition becomes a concern, the BLM's Field Manager and/or Fire Management Officer may require appropriate fire-suppression resources to be stationed onsite, ready to respond, at the permit holder's expense. The Field Manager may also shut down filming or restrict certain filming activities if wildfire danger is high.

#### *Motorized vehicle use*

The following motorized vehicle restrictions would apply to all BLM-issued film permits:

- No parking or other use within the BLM's Greenwood Creek parking area.
- No motorized vehicle use of any kind at or near the mouth of Greenwood Creek.
- Motorized vehicle use outside of BLM's Magnolia Ranch and Cronan Ranch parking areas will be authorized by the BLM on a case-by-case basis and specified in the BLM-issued permit.
- No refueling or maintenance of motorized vehicles will be allowed unless specified in the permit.

A proposed motorized vehicle use plan is required as part of the application process. To ensure that visitors and other public land users have adequate parking during BLM-permitted filming, the permit holder may not use the BLM's Greenwood Creek parking area. Also, the permit holder may not occupy more than five spaces in each of the BLM's Magnolia Ranch and Cronan Ranch parking areas. If more than five parking spaces are needed in each of these two parking areas, the permit holder will be required to find offsite parking. If it is determined by the BLM that offsite parking is necessary, the permit holder is responsible for transporting film crews, equipment, etc. to and from the Greenwood Creek and/or Cronan Ranch parcels, at the permit holder's expense.

Motorized vehicle use on BLM-administered land outside of the BLM's Magnolia Ranch and Cronan Ranch parking areas will be authorized by the BLM on a case-by-case basis and will be specified in the permit. The BLM will base this authorization on the motorized vehicle use plan submitted as part of the application. The BLM will generally limit vehicle use to the minimal number/size/weight necessary for production. This includes any and all production-related vehicles. Vehicle use may be prohibited or heavily restricted to reduce the risk of inadvertent wildfire ignitions, to prevent damage to the BLM's existing recreation facilities such as designated trails, to reduce potential conflicts with other public land users such as horseback riders, and to protect sensitive environmental resources. The use of multi-axle vehicles may be prohibited depending on

soil moisture and other conditions. Vehicle speeds are limited to 15 mph at all times. Vehicle use of any kind will not be allowed on BLM-administered land at or near the mouth of Greenwood Creek.

Once vehicle use has been specified in the permit, any changes will require submitting a new motorized vehicle plan to the BLM for approval in writing. Proposed changes to vehicle use specified in the BLM-issued permit will not be approved informally onsite by the BLM Monitor or other BLM representatives, as BLM permitted-film activities occur.

#### *Aircraft use*

Liability insurance in the amount of \$10,000,000 (ten million dollars) is required for all aircraft use related to filming on BLM-administered land. As part of the application process the BLM will require a the applicant to provide a certificate of insurance that names the United States Department of the Interior (USDI) Bureau of Land Management Mother Lode Field Office as co-insured. All flights must have a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)-approved flight plan and the applicant will submit a copy of the approved flight plan to the BLM as part of the application process. FAA approval does not constitute BLM approval for a flight plan affecting BLM-administered lands. The following additional information may be required by the BLM:

- Make, model and tail number.
- Hours of aircraft operation each day.
- Color of aircraft.
- Pilot name and operating radio frequency.

The BLM will require that all aircraft (used as part of the film project and subject to the BLM-issued film permit) maintain flight levels above ground per FAA regulations (usually 500 feet above ground level) and/or per a FAA-approved flight plan (sometimes authorizing lower flight levels). Low-level flights above areas of the Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek parcels where horseback riding is popular will be taken into consideration and the BLM may require changes to the flight plan, as appropriate, to prevent potential conflicts. Landing a helicopter or other aircraft onsite will be approved by the BLM in advance on a case-by-case basis and will be specified in the BLM-issued permit.

#### *Environmental protections and safeguards*

Environmental surveys (for special status plant and wildlife, and sensitive archaeological sites) of the project area (i.e., film locations specified in the application) may be conducted as part of the application review process, prior to issuance of the film permit. If sensitive environmental resources are identified within proposed filming locations and could be negatively affected by BLM-permitted filming activities, a protective buffer will be placed around the resources by the BLM. Filming or other related activities will not be allowed within the protective buffer. Other protective measures may be taken by the BLM. The permit holder will cooperate with the BLM in protecting sensitive resources. Proposals to dig holes or cause other ground disturbance will likely require plant, wildlife, and archaeological site surveys. Such proposals will be authorized by the BLM on a case-by-case basis and will be specified in the permit.

### **3.2 Project Design Features**

To avoid, minimize, or mitigate potentially negative environmental impacts, permit holders will be subject to the general terms and conditions in 43 CFR § 2920.3 as well as the terms and conditions listed below (to be included as stipulations in the BLM-issued film permit). Please note that

depending on the proposed location(s), timing, and type of filming activity, the BLM may include additional terms and conditions in the permit (i.e., bonding, reimbursement for overtime costs, etc.).

General:

1. The permit holder is required to read, understand, and comply with all of the permit terms, conditions, and stipulations. It is the permit holder's responsibility to ensure that all employees, contractors, vendors, and others involved in the permitted filming activity follow all of the permit terms, conditions, and stipulations, and any other BLM requirements.
2. The permit holder will designate a representative for field operations before filming activities commence. This person will be the sole field representative for the permit holder's employees or contractors in dealing with the BLM. Said representative will be responsible to receive and comply with all communications and decisions issued by the BLM. The selected representative will be a Unit Production Manager or higher.
3. The permit holder agrees to hold harmless the United States for any and all liability, including theft, injury to persons, or damage to property, which may result directly or indirectly from the use permitted by the BLM. A certificate of insurance, co-insuring the **United State Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management Mother Lode Field Office** at 5152 Hillside Circle, El Dorado Hills, CA 95762 will be issued in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000 (one million dollars) and be in effect through the duration of the permit. **If aircraft will be used**, the permit holder will instead maintain insurance in the amount of \$10,000,000 (ten million dollars) naming the **United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management Mother Lode Field Office** as co-insured.
4. The permit holder will be in physical possession of the BLM-issued film permit to constitute a valid authorization. The permit holder will present the permit to any federal, state or local law enforcement officer requesting it.
5. The permit holder will not use location(s) which are not specified in the BLM-issued permit. The permit holder will not allow use of any of the permit holder's locations by other person/persons that do not have a valid BLM-issued permit for that location. The permit holder will be certain of the BLM-permitted filming location(s).
6. A BLM monitor may be present at any time during the BLM-permitted filming activity. For large productions, the BLM monitor may be present during the set up and take down each day. The BLM monitor will be contacted by the permit holder or his/her agent, at least one day in advance, and advised of times and places for set up each day. The BLM monitor may conduct spot checks throughout the term of the permit. If the BLM monitor or other BLM staff is needed onsite constantly during the permitted filming activities, the permit holder will reimburse the BLM for the cost of the monitor and other BLM staff.
7. The permit holder is fully responsible for any other permits, licenses, and other approvals required by local, state, and federal agencies. The permit holder will ensure that all persons operating under the BLM-issued permit have obtained, prior to the start of filming on BLM-administered land, all required federal, state, and local permits, licenses, and other approvals. The permit holder is responsible for ensuring compliance with this

stipulation by all his/her agents, contractors, vendors, etc. involved in the BLM-permitted filming activity.

8. The permit holder will provide credits in the final production. The credits must give special thanks to the Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management Mother Lode Field Office.
9. The permit holder will provide a copy of the final production to the BLM Mother Lode Field Office. The permit holder will also provide the BLM with official publicity media (8 x 10 photographs, DVDs, or posters) for the BLM to use in public presentations. These media may be featured on BLM websites and will be clearly noted that they are protected by copyright laws and not to be reproduced. The permit holder will provide this material within 60 days of the release of the production.

Fire safety requirements:

10. Smoking will be allowed only in designated areas. The permit holder will clearly mark these areas and provide "fire safe" cigarette containers. Cigarettes will not be discarded on the ground at any time. Any violation of this stipulation may result in temporary suspension of the permit until such time that the permit holder conducts a safety meeting with the BLM's Fire Management Officer. Continuous violations of this stipulation will result in the termination of the permit.
11. During periods of high fire danger, smoking will not be allowed onsite except within an enclosed vehicle.
12. The permit holder is fully responsible for any fire resulting from his/her operations under the permit. It is the permit holders' responsibility to be aware of the current BLM fire restrictions and to follow them accordingly. If fire danger becomes a concern (i.e., due to dry warm weather), the BLM Fire Management Officer or Field Manager may require fire-suppression resources to be stationed onsite, on standby, at the permit holder's expense.
13. Generators and combustion engines will not be allowed in grass or other vegetation.
14. Filming activities involving pyrotechnic, explosive devices, ammunitions, or open flames (other than campfires) will be authorized by the BLM on a case-by-case basis and specified in the BLM-issued permit. Campfires are allowed only after a BLM-issued campfire permit is obtained. Other campfire safety requirements in this permit will apply.

Campfire requirements:

15. Any use of a campfire during the BLM-permitted filming activity will require a campfire permit obtained in advance from the BLM Mother Lode Field Office.
16. The permit holder will use a fire pan for a base. The permit holder will not use rocks from BLM-administered land to build a fire ring or disguise the fire pan.
17. The campfire must be at least 5 ft from grasses, shrubs, and other vegetation.

18. If wind gusts are 20 mph or more (as measured by official Remote Automated Weather Stations <http://raws.wrh.noaa.gov/roman/> [use Pilot Hill or other stations nearest the filming location in the northern California area]), the campfire permit will be suspended.
19. The permit holder will have somebody tending the fire at all times. The tender will have a fire extinguisher, 10 gallons of water, and a shovel onsite to control the campfire and put it out.
20. The permit holder will remove all evidence of the campfire. The permit holder will remove all ashes and place them in a suitable container with a lid. The container must be removed from BLM-administered land and disposed of safely.
21. One hour after campfire cleanup, the permit holder must monitor the campfire area by walking around to assure no embers or sparks are present.

Motorized vehicle use:

22. The permit holder will not use motorized vehicles or place film-related items within the BLM's Greenwood Creek parking area.
23. The permit holder will not use motorized vehicles of any kind at or near the mouth of Greenwood Creek.
24. Motorized vehicle use on BLM-administered land (outside of BLM's Magnolia Ranch and Cronan Ranch parking areas) will be authorized by the BLM on a case-by-case basis and will be specified in the BLM-issued permit. Any violation of this stipulation may result in temporary suspension of the permit. Continuous violations of this stipulation will result in the termination of the permit.
25. Once motorized vehicle use has been specified in the permit, any changes will require submitting a new motorized vehicle plan to the BLM for approval in writing. Proposed changes to vehicle use specified in the BLM-issued permit will not be approved informally onsite by the BLM Monitor or other BLM representatives, as BLM permitted-film activities occur.
26. The permit holder will not refuel and/or maintain motorized vehicles on BLM-administered land.
27. To ensure that visitors and other public land users have parking opportunities during filming, the permit holder will not occupy more than five spaces in the BLM's Magnolia Ranch and Cronan Ranch parking areas. If more than five parking spaces are needed in each of these parking areas, the permit holder will be required to find offsite parking. If it is determined that offsite parking is necessary by the BLM, the permit holder is responsible for transporting film crews, equipment, etc. to and from BLM-administered land.

Aircraft use:

28. All aircraft used will maintain flight levels as per an FAA-approved flight plan at all times. A copy of the FAA-approved flight plan will be submitted to the BLM as part of the BLM's application review process.
29. The BLM reserves the right to make adjustments to the flight plan to avoid conflicts with other public land users.
30. Landing a helicopter or other aircraft onsite will be authorized by the BLM on a case-by-case basis and will be specified in the BLM-issued permit.

Environmental protection:

31. No dumping of sewage, trash, or waste water is allowed. The permit holder must transport waste to an appropriate waste processing facility. No dumping or draining of hazardous materials (i.e., antifreeze, oils, compounds used in construction, building materials, cement, make-ups, etc.). Any "special visual effects" to be used will be approved by the BLM on a case-by-case basis and specified in the BLM-issued permit.
32. The permit holder will not release any substance (liquid or otherwise) into waters of the South Fork of the American River or its tributaries without first obtaining written permission from the BLM.
33. The use of animals and/or exotic plants will be specified in the permit. The permit holder is responsible for controlling animals and cleaning up after them to avoid dissemination of weed seeds or diseases. All manure and hay (and other animal feed) will be entirely removed from the filming location(s) and disposed of at appropriate offsite facilities on a daily basis. If hay or other grass feed is brought onsite, it must be certified weed free. Animals and pets will be restrained either by enclosure in a kennel or by chaining to a point. The permit holder is responsible for ensuring that contractors in charge of animals are aware of this stipulation.
34. The permit holder will not remove, prune, or alter any onsite vegetation, shrubs, grasses or wildflower species unless it is authorized in advance by the BLM and specified in the BLM-issued permit.
35. The permit holder will not take, harass, kill, or collect any onsite wildlife.
36. Any proposed ground disturbance (i.e., ditching, leveling, mounding, etc.) will be authorized by the BLM on a case-by-case basis and will be specified in the BLM-issued permit, prior to filming.
37. If historical, archeological, or paleontological resources are discovered during filming activity, the permit holder will take reasonable care to preserve these resources in situ and immediately inform the BLM Monitor or Field Manager (if the BLM Monitor is unavailable).
38. Defacing, removing, disturbing, or destroying any scientific, cultural, archaeological, or historic resource by the permit holder, his/her agents, employees, contractors, vendors,

etc. will not be allowed. Offenders may be subject to prosecution under applicable laws and regulations.

39. Plant, wildlife, and archaeological site surveys of the project area (i.e., specific film locations) may be conducted as part of the BLM's application review process, prior to issuance of the film permit. If sensitive environmental resources are identified, a protective buffer will be placed around them by the BLM. Filming or other related activities will not be allowed within the protective buffer. The extent of the buffer area will depend on the environmental resource identified for protection. Other protective measures may be taken by the BLM. The permit holder will fully comply with the BLM's protection measures and cooperate in protecting environmental sensitive resources identified by the BLM.

Other:

40. The permit holder will understand that the public lands are multiple-use in nature; there will be times when other public land users (such as recreationists) are in the vicinity of the filming location(s). The permit holder will be respectful of other public land users and use acceptable manners and attitude while dealing with others. Issuance of this permit does not constitute exclusive use of the public lands by the permit holder.
41. The permit holder will not interfere with recreational boating use (regardless of whether it is permitted by the BLM or not). The permit holder is responsible for working with boaters to accommodate their needs. The permit holder may ask boaters to temporarily stay out of a particular area during actual filming (so as to not unduly delay production), but will as soon as possible allow boaters to proceed through the area (to take out, to put in, etc.). Boaters should not be delayed more than 15 minutes before being allowed to proceed. If necessary the permit holder will have crewmembers strategically positioned as "spotters" to guide boaters through the filming location(s).
42. The permit holder will not place sets or other items onsite that interfere with recreational boating. Film-related sets and other items will not prevent boaters from proceeding through the filming location(s).
43. The BLM will permit filming activity in a way that avoids potential conflicts with permitted recreational boating use. If a filming activity has the potential to conflict with boating, this activity will not be allowed during peak boating times from 11 am to 3 pm. The permit holder may ask boaters to temporarily stay out of a particular area during actual filming (so as to not unduly delay production), but will as soon as possible allow boaters to proceed through the area (to take out, to put in, etc.). Boaters should not be delayed more than 15 minutes before being allowed to proceed. If necessary the permit holder will have crewmembers strategically positioned as "spotters" to guide boaters through the filming location(s).
44. The permit holder will keep the project area in a clean and orderly fashion and any refuse will be hauled away and disposed of in a legally acceptable manner.
45. The BLM reserves the right to require, at the permit holder's expense, an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) or its equivalent onsite during the BLM-permitted filming activities

46. The permit holder will not create safety hazards. If potential safety hazards are present during filming, the permit holder will use signs, flagging, orange cones, and/or other appropriate devices to clearly mark, fence, and/or barricade potential safety hazards created during BLM-permitted filming activities and to otherwise provide for the safety of all film-related personnel and other public land users.
47. In cases where filming equipment, sets, and related items will stay onsite overnight or for extended periods, the permit holder may prohibit the members of the public from entering the immediate area where such items are kept in order to secure the items. The permit holder is responsible for securing and protecting such items from theft, damage, vandalism, etc. During the duration of the permit, it is highly recommended that the permit holder hire a private security service for the hours the set/area is unoccupied.
48. The permit holder will return all areas disturbed as a result of BLM-permitted filming activity to their preexisting condition immediately upon completion of filming, to BLM standards. Example: if the BLM allows the permit holder to dig a hole, the permit holder will fill it back in and compress it to how it was prior to digging.
49. It is the permit holder's responsibility to schedule an onsite postproduction assessment with the BLM at least 24 hours in advance of the end of production and to meet with the BLM representative during the assessment unless approved by the BLM in writing. If it is found that noncompliance occurred during the permitted filming activity, the permit holder will be required to rehabilitate the noncompliance location(s) to BLM standards. This may include, but is not limited to, the purchase of seed, cost of labor to rehab the site, and/or monetary fines.

Any deviation from these terms, conditions, and stipulations (without prior approval by the BLM) may result in immediate cancellation of the permit, civil or criminal trespass action, and denial of all future film permits by the BLM. In some cases violation may be punishable by fines and cost of resource rehabilitation.

### **3.3 No Action**

Under the no action alternative, the BLM would not allow filming within the Cronan Ranch or Greenwood Creek parcels. The no action alternative is considered as a part of BLM's environmental review process and provides a comparison to the proposed action. The no action alternative could be selected by the BLM if warranted by the findings of this EA.

### **3.4 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Analysis**

There were no other alternatives considered for analysis.

### **4.0 Affected Environment**

The project area includes the Cronan Ranch and adjoining Greenwood Creek parcels, both located along the South Fork of the American River – the dominant natural feature of the area. The South Fork is 87 miles long and drains an 840-square mile watershed in the west-central Sierra Nevada. Elevations within this watershed range from 466 feet above sea level at Folsom Lake to about 10,000 feet along the crest of the Sierra. Elevations within the Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek

parcels average about 800 feet amsl. Geologically the area is within the Sierran foothill metamorphic belt.

The Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek parcels are located within the El Dorado County Air Quality Management District, which administer the state and federal Clean Air Acts. Air quality in the district is generally good. However, El Dorado County is located to the west of the Sierra Nevada crest (which blocks prevailing winds) and east of the Sacramento Valley (which is shaped like a long, oval bowl). An inversion layer can trap pollutants from the highly populated Sacramento Valley close to the ground, causing air quality to become unhealthy in the region. During the summer, the district often fails to meet both the state and federal health-based standards for ozone.

The Greenwood Creek parcel (732 acres) is bisected by the South Fork of the American River. The northern portion of the parcel includes segments of Greenwood and Hastings creeks. Soils within the northern portion of the parcel are a mix of Sierra, Auberry, and Boomer series. South-facing hill slopes are dominated by interior live oak woodland with black oak, California buckeye, toyon, buckbrush, white leaf manzanita, keckiella, California coffeeberry, poison oak, and pipe vine. A broad riparian habitat along the river includes sand bar willow, arroyo willow, shining willow, valley oak, Oregon ash, white alder, Fremont cottonwood, button willow, coyote bush, mock orange, California wild grape, deer grass, and scotch broom. Hastings Creek includes Douglas fir and incense cedar, as well as riparian species such as Oregon ash and California wild grape. Blue oak savannah grasslands composed largely of non-native annual species dominate the relatively flat portions of the parcel, between the two creeks, along Highway 49.

The Cronan Ranch parcel is 1400 acres. The soils are a mix of Auburn and Sobrante series. There are no named drainages within the parcel. One drainage is intermittent, the rest are ephemeral. The parcel contains blue oak savannah, live oak/gray pine woodland, and riparian areas. Much of the live oak/gray pine woodland appears to have been removed by the previous landowner to improve grazing. There is a significant population of noxious weeds, especially yellow-star thistle and medusa head. The South Fork of the American River runs along the southern edge of the parcel.

Several wildlife species use these habitats, and are typical of the west-central Sierra Nevada foothills. Mammals include mule deer, coyote, grey fox, bobcat, striped skunk, black-tailed jackrabbit, grey squirrel, deer mice and wood rat. Bird species include turkey vulture, red-tailed hawk, western bluebird, California brown towhee, spotted towhee, California quail, wild turkey, acorn woodpecker, northern flicker, Anna's hummingbird, Bewick's wren, plain titmouse, common bushtit, ash-throated flycatcher, house finch, lesser goldfinch, and several sparrow species. Amphibian and reptiles species include Pacific tree frog, western fence lizard, Gilbert's skink, western whiptail, and gopher snake. This list is not intended to be comprehensive, but is a list of species that are commonly seen and/or evidence of these species is commonly encountered.

Recreational use of the Greenwood Creek and Cronan Ranch parcels is extremely high (excluding the southern, or Clark Mountain, portion of the Greenwood Creek parcel). These parcels are among the most popular recreational lands managed by the Mother Lode Field Office. Legal access to these parcels is via Highway 49 and a county-maintained Pedro Hill Road. The BLM and its partners have built trails, trailheads/parking lots, and other visitor facilities to facilitate low-impact non-motorized recreational use (hiking, nature viewing, horseback riding, mountain biking, whitewater boating, hang-gliding, etc.) within these parcels. These facilities include the Greenwood Creek, Magnolia Ranch, and Cronan Ranch parking areas.

The BLM manages the parcels in accordance with the class II visual resource management (VRM) standard. Of note, there is a small area of BLM-administered land within the Greenwood Creek parcel (the river corridor at Clark Mountain) managed in accordance with the class I VRM standard. The BLM's objective for class II is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

The Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek parcels fall within areas of BLM-administered lands with special values and designations. Both parcels are located within the South Fork American River Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA), designated by the BLM in 2008. Also, the BLM recommended in 2008 that the South Fork of the American River corridor from Chili Bar to Salmon Falls (including portions of the Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek parcels) be incorporated into the national wild and scenic river system due, in part, to its outstandingly remarkable whitewater recreation and cultural resource values. The recommended classification is recreational.

## **5.0 Environmental Effects**

The following critical elements have been determined to be unaffected by the proposed action: areas of critical environmental concern, prime/unique farmlands, floodplains, hazardous waste, wetlands and riparian zone, wilderness, and environmental justice.

### **5.1 Impacts of the Proposed Action**

Air, water, and soil resources – The proposed action would not negatively impact air, water, and soil resources. Perhaps the greatest potential cause of erosion and dust is unregulated motorized vehicle use, depending on the terrain, soil moisture, and other conditions. However, motorized vehicle use related to a film proposal would be authorized by the BLM on a case-by-case basis and specified in the BLM-issued permit, prior to the start of filming activity. The applicant is required to submit a motorized vehicle use plan as part of the application process. Motorized vehicle use would be allowed by the BLM in a way that would cause little or no soil erosion and dust. In terms of water quality, the permit holder would not be allowed to dump sewage, trash, or waste water onsite. Any proposed ground disturbance (i.e., ditching, leveling, mounding, etc.) would be authorized by the BLM on a case-by-case basis and would be specified in the BLM-issued permit, prior to the start of filming. The BLM would not allow ground disturbance leading to excessive soil erosion or dust in either the short or long terms. The permit holder would be required to return the disturbed areas to their preexisting condition.

Vegetation – The proposed action would not negatively affect vegetation, including special status plants. The permit holder would not be allowed to remove, prune, or alter any onsite shrubs, trees, grasses, or wildflower species unless specifically authorized by the BLM in advance and specified in the permit. The BLM would prevent the introduction and spread of noxious weeds by requiring the permit holder to ensure that feed and manure associated with animals used onsite as part of the film production are weed free and removed on a daily basis. The use of exotic plants would be disclosed to the BLM during the application process and would be specified in the permit. The BLM would have an opportunity to regulate the use of exotic (potentially weedy) plants to prevent weed introductions. Prevention of weed introduction and spread must be addressed in the motorized vehicle use plan submitted as part of the application process. The BLM would control motorized vehicle use and ground disturbance related to film production, both of which can (if left unchecked) negatively affect sensitive native vegetation, including special status species. If necessary, a special

status plant survey of the project area (i.e., specific film locations) would be conducted as part of the BLM's application review process, prior to issuance of the film permit. If special status plants are identified and could be negatively affected by the proposed filming activity, a protective buffer would be placed around them by the BLM. Filming or other related activities would not be allowed within the protective buffer.

**Wildlife** – The proposed action would not negatively affect wildlife, including special status wildlife. The permit holder would not be allowed to take, harass, kill, or collect any wildlife. If necessary, a special status wildlife survey of the project area (i.e., specific film locations) would be conducted as part of the BLM's application review process, prior to issuance of the film permit. If sensitive special status wildlife species or habitat are identified, a protective buffer would be placed around them by the BLM. Filming or other related activities would not be allowed within the protective buffer. Other requirements imposed by the BLM or the US Fish and Wildlife Service may apply to federally listed species.

**Cultural resources** – The proposed action would not negatively affect significant cultural resources. The BLM would carefully control motorized vehicle use and ground disturbance, both of which can (if left unchecked) negatively affect archaeological sites or other sensitive cultural resources. Unregulated motorized vehicle use can damage sensitive cultural resources, depending on the terrain, soil moisture, and other conditions. However, motorized vehicle use and ground disturbance related to a film proposal would be authorized by the BLM on a case-by-case basis and specified in the BLM-issued permit. The applicant would be required to submit a motorized vehicle use plan as part of the application process. The BLM would allow motorized vehicle use and ground disturbance in a way that does not affect sensitive cultural resources. If necessary, a cultural resource survey of the project area (i.e., specific film locations) would be conducted as part of the BLM's application review process, prior to issuance of the film permit. If archaeological sites are identified and could be negatively affected by the proposed filming activity, a protective buffer would be placed around them by the BLM. Filming or other related activities would not be allowed within the protective buffer. Defacing, removing, disturbing, or destroying any scientific, cultural, archaeological, or historic resources by the permit holder, his/her agents, employees, contractors, vendors, etc. would not be allowed. Offenders may be subject to prosecution under applicable laws and regulations. If scientific, cultural, archaeological, or historic resources are discovered during filming activity, the permit holder would take reasonable care to preserve these resources in situ and immediately inform the BLM Monitor or Field Manager (if the BLM Monitor is unavailable). The BLM archaeologist would likely be called into assess the situation and offer management recommendations. A protective buffer may be established by the BLM to prevent further disturbance.

**Visual resources** – The BLM manages the Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek parcels mostly in accordance with the VRM class II standard. Of note, there is a small area near Clark Mountain within the Greenwood Creek parcel managed by the BLM in accordance with the VRM class I standard. The proposed action would be consistent with the management objectives for both of these classes. All aspects of BLM-permitted filming activity including constructed film sets would be temporary; they would be entirely removed and the areas returned to their preexisting condition (as appropriate). Any proposed ground disturbance, vegetation removal, or other changes to the landscape related to the proposed filming activity would be authorized by the BLM on a case-by-case basis and specified in the permit. The permit holder would be required to return disturbed areas to their preexisting condition upon completion of filming.

**Recreation** – The project area is part of a Special Recreation Management Area designated by the BLM in 2008. The proposed action may temporarily displace recreationists and other public land

users. Negative impacts to recreation may result, but would be negligible or minimal and would be temporary – lasting hours or days, rather than weeks or years. To reduce potential conflicts, the permit holder is encouraged to conduct permitted-filming activities on weekdays, particularly during the high use season (October 31 to May 31). During filming, certain locations may be temporarily off limits to recreationists or other public land users. The BLM would ensure general access to the parcels, including parking access, for other public land users. The permit holder would not be allowed to occupy the BLM’s Greenwood Creek parking area, nor would the permit holder be allowed to occupy more than five spaces in each of the BLM’s Cronan Ranch and Magnolia Ranch parking areas. If the permit holder requires additional parking spaces, he/she would be required to find offsite parking and would be responsible for transporting filming-related personnel, equipment, and other items to and from the offsite parking area. Issuance of this permit does not constitute exclusive use of the public lands by the permit holder, and the permit holder is expected to be respectful of other public land users and use acceptable manners and attitude while dealing with members of the public. The BLM would attempt to notify the public in advance of any film productions that have the potential to disrupt popular recreational activities like hiking and horseback riding, or permitted recreational activities such as whitewater boating. The permit holder would not be allowed to interfere with whitewater boating use. The permit holder would work with boaters to accommodate their needs. The BLM will permit filming activity in a way that avoids potential conflicts with permitted recreational boating use. If a filming activity has the potential to conflict with boating, this activity will not be allowed during peak boating times from 11 am to 3 pm. The permit holder may ask boaters to temporarily stay out of an area during actual filming, but would as soon as possible allow boaters to proceed through filming locations (i.e., to take out, put in, etc.). Boaters should not be delayed more than 15 minutes before being allowed to proceed. If necessary the permit holder would have crewmembers strategically positioned as “spotters” to guide boaters through the filming location(s). The permit holder would not place sets or other items onsite that interfere with recreational boating. Film-related sets and other items would not prevent boaters from proceeding through the filming location(s). The BLM would permit filming activity in a way that avoids potential conflicts with permitted recreational boating use.

Wild and scenic river values and classification – In 2008 the BLM recommended that the South Fork of the American River, from Chile Bar to Salmon Falls Bridge (including portions of the Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek parcels), is eligible and suitable to become part of the national wild and scenic river system. The recommended outstandingly remarkable values are whitewater recreation and cultural resources. The recommended classification is recreational. The proposed action would not negatively affect the recommended values and classification. The permit holder would not be allowed to interfere with recreational boating (permitted by the BLM or not). The permit holder would work with boaters to accommodate their needs. Sensitive cultural resources such as archaeological sites would be protected. The BLM would authorize motorized vehicle use and other potential ground disturbing use on a case-by-case basis in a way that would not affect sensitive cultural resources. The BLM would specify any ground disturbance in the permit. It would be permitted in a way that prevents damage to sensitive cultural resources. The BLM may conduct surveys of film locations, especially where proposed ground disturbance would occur, and establish protective buffers around sensitive cultural resources as necessary. The permit holder would not be allowed to conduct film-related activities within these buffers.

## **5.2 Impacts of the No Action Alternative**

Under the no action alternative, there would be no impacts to the environment, with the exception of possibly the local economic situation. The economic impacts of filming on local economies are difficult to quantify; they are believed to vary depending on the size and duration of the production.

When film productions do take place there is clearly beneficial impacts to local businesses as film crews often eat at local restaurants, stay in local hotels, use local vendors, etc. Quantifying these economic impacts is beyond the scope of this EA, though the impacts are believed to be generally beneficial though temporary and short-term – lasting as long as the film production is “in town.” However, if the BLM were to decide to not allow filming within the Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek parcels, presumably filmmakers could find other similar and suitable filming locations within El Dorado County.

### **5.3 Cumulative Impacts**

Potential negative impacts to air, water, and soil resources, special status plants and wildlife, significant or outstandingly remarkable cultural resources, visual resources, recreation and the recommended wild and scenic river values and classification are not expected due to the project design features and other elements of the proposed action. Therefore, negative cumulative impacts at a larger scale and timeframe are not expected.

### **6.0 Agencies and Persons Consulted**

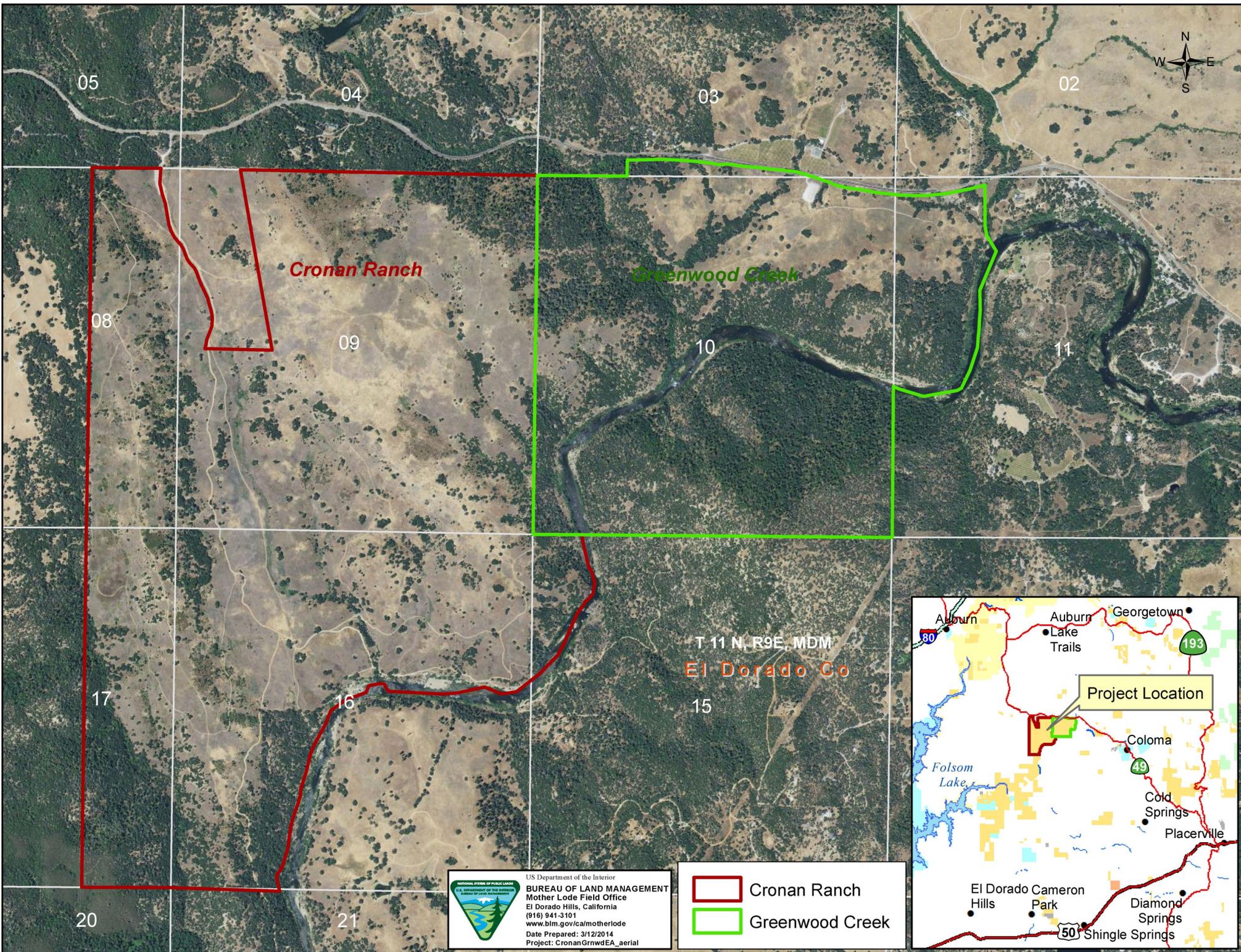
BLM consulted and received input from the El Dorado Lake Tahoe Film and Media Office.

### 6.1 BLM Interdisciplinary Team

<i>/s/ James Barnes</i>	<i>6/16/14</i>
NEPA Coordinator/Cultural Resource Specialist	Date
<i>/s/ Peggy Cranston</i>	<i>6/16/14</i>
Wildlife Biologist	Date
<i>/s/ Beth Brenneman</i>	<i>6/9/14</i>
Botanist	Date
<i>/s/ Jeff Horn</i>	<i>6/10/14</i>
Outdoor Recreation Planner/VRM Specialist	Date
<i>/s/ Heather Fullerton</i>	<i>6/9/14</i>
Realty Specialist	Date
<i>/s/ James Eicher</i>	<i>6/30/14</i>
Wild and Scenic River Specialist	Date
<i>/s/ Gerald Martinez</i>	<i>6/10/14</i>
Fire Management Officer	Date

### 6.3 Availability of Document and Comment Procedures

This EA, posted on Mother Lode Field Office's website ([www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode](http://www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode)) under Information, NEPA (or available upon request), will be available for a 30-day public review period. Comments should be sent to the Mother Lode Field Office, 5152 Hillside Circle, El Dorado Hills, CA 95762 or emailed to us at [jjbarnes@blm.gov](mailto:jjbarnes@blm.gov).



**Cronan Ranch**

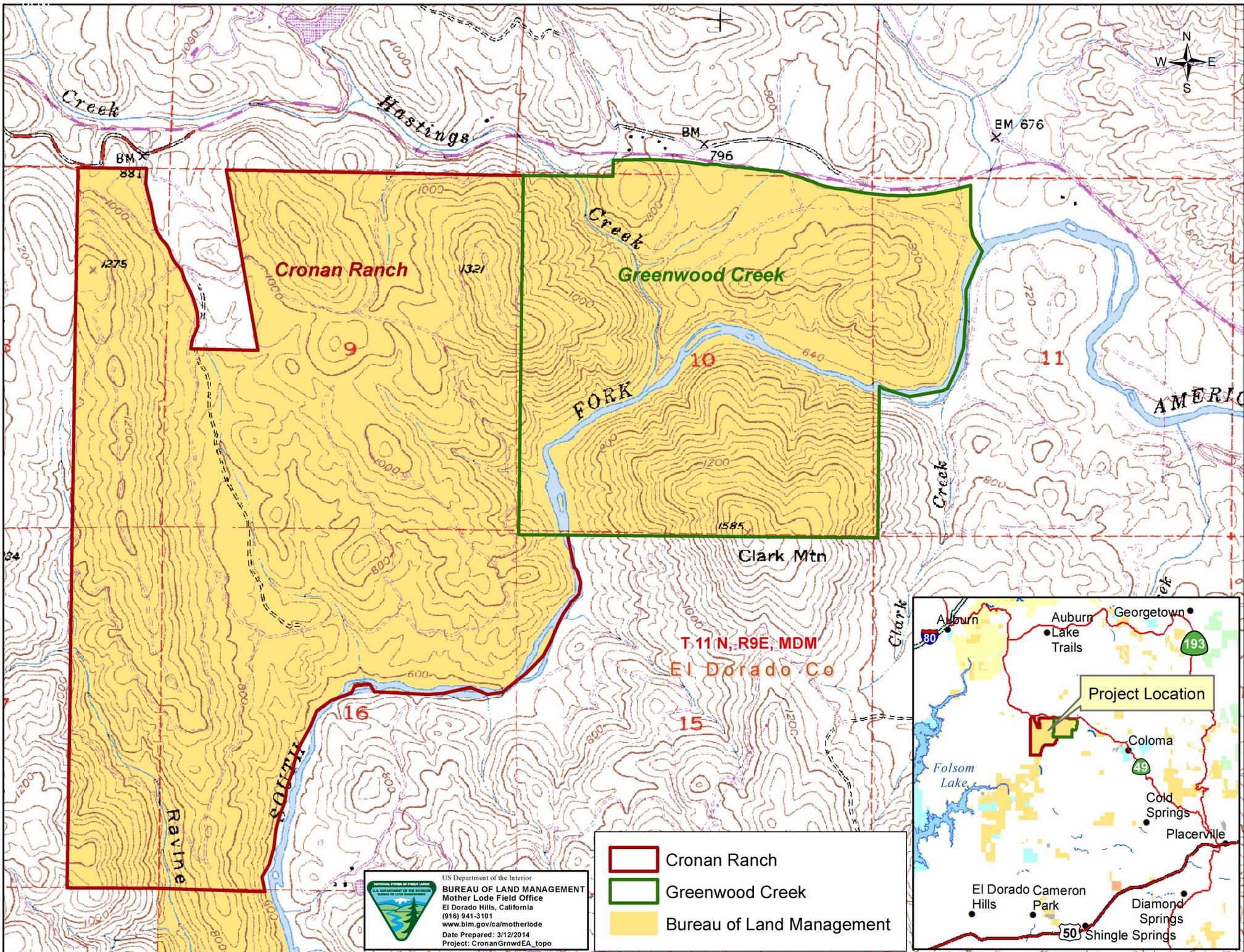
**Greenwood Creek**

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El Dorado Co

US Department of the Interior  
**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**  
 Mother Lode Field Office  
 El Dorado Hills, California  
 (916) 941-3101  
[www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode](http://www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode)  
 Date Prepared: 3/12/2014  
 Project: CronanGrnwDEA\_aerial

- Cronan Ranch
- Greenwood Creek





**Cronan Ranch**

**Greenwood Creek**

**T.11N.,R9E,MDM  
El Dorado Co**

- Cronan Ranch
- Greenwood Creek
- Bureau of Land Management


 US Department of the Interior  
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 Mother Lode Field Office  
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 Project: CronanGrnwdEA\_topo